443 noodles. Their prices were higher than in Minburi or Bangkok, but their service was such a convenience that many people rarely went to town. Some adults in Bang Chan had never been to Bangkok though almost all had visited Minburi, about 3 [431] miles from the temple. Venders often extended credit, and also accepted items such as fresh fish, fruit, and eggs on a barter basis, thus providing an outlet for small amounts of home products. When the subsidiary canals were dry, however, venders could not get to some parts of the village.

Home Sites and Houses

General Arrangement

361 487 Since the canals provided the chief means of local transportation for much of the year, and also supplied water for many household uses, houses were built near the canal, usually within sight of a neighbor's. Home sites were mounded up to a level of two or three feet above that of the fields, but even so, water might cover the mound at the peak of the rainy season. Old wooden houses were set in a grove of bamboo, bananas and other fruit trees and vines, occa- 343 sionally betel and coconut palms. Nearby might be a shed for the water buffalo which were the draught animals used in farming. Rarely one saw a walled privy.[1] On the same mound might be a cottage built by parents for married children or by an affluent farmer for a hired hand. In this case, the threshing floor, firewood from trees on the mound, and area 342 for kitchen garden would be shared. Many houses were built on stilts to avoid flooding when the water level was high. If the house was elevated sufficiently, the area underneath provided a relatively cool shelter during the hot season for the buffalo, and even for family members for some of their daytime activities.

Depending on the resources of the family, houses were built of either thatch or wood, roofed with thatch, galvan- 352 ized iron or occasionally, tile. Split bamboo or matting might be used for dividing walls if the house had more than one room. Wooden flooring was usual, but in simpler thatched houses with dirt floors, the buffalo might be sheltered under the same roof with the family. In such a house, one or more low wooden platforms were built for sitting and sleeping. Wide cracks between floor boards conveniently permitted betel 364 chewers to spit without the need for a spittoon. Those who 267 were preparing food or clearing up after a meal could also thus discard refuse or dispose of leftover food that was to 364 be given to chickens, without leaving the kitchen. Some

1

1. cf. Hauck, 1956, p. 45-6 for description of latrine facilities.